DESIGN

A MONTHLY JOURNAL FOR MANUFACTURERS AND DESIGNERS

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The fable of the lady and the frog

A certain Romantic Maiden, who was reckoned extremely beautiful in a rather old-fashioned way, once found a Frog in her path, and dropped it a curtsey. "What's that in aid of?" asked the Frog. "Aren't you a prince in disguise?" she enquired, nettled. "No, Ma'am," said he, "I'm a Frog — in a hurry." And he hopped away, muttering under his breath.

Even in this age of hard work and few illusions, there are people who hope for a magical solution to their problems. TI, for their part, are planning increased production — of intricate precision tubes . . . of special paints and finishes . . . electrical appliances, fittings, cables . . . bicycles and bicycle components . . . traffic signs . . . fabricated aluminium alloys . . . parts of motor-cars, aircraft, locomotives . . . everything in short, which TI make and Britain can sell.

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Editorial Address: Tilbury House, Petty France, London SW1

Telephone: Whitehall 6322 *For subscription details see p.* 24

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Display and the product

"GOODS SHOULD NEVER compete with their stands, for they will always be at a disadvantage since they are not made to brave such competition...." With this naive admission, one of our leading business magazines recently tried to resurrect the old bogy that our contemporary designers care more for display than for the product. This myth was widely canvassed in 1946-47 at the time of the "Britain Can Make It" and "Enterprise Scotland" exhibitions. It certainly dies hard. It will continue to crop up after every exhibition until such time as our manufacturers pay the same attention to product design as some of them do to display.

The disparity between the excellence of stand design and the poverty of product design was never more remarkable than at this year's BIF, but that is no argument for dismissing the display designer nor for forcing him to lower his standards. The only resolution of this discord must be to raise the design of the goods to the same standard as the display. To aim at the lowest common denominator of display and product would be to surrender the pass on the eve of victory, for, whatever the die-hards say, the revolution in British display technique has already had a profound influence for the good on the design policies of many firms which have had the courage to employ trained designers for their exhibition stands.

It does not much matter from what quarter the impetus towards ungrading product design comes so long as the standards are raised. In some firms there is a long tradition of enlightened interest in design; in others there may be a recent convert in the top management; in others it may be the influence of a progressive advertising agent which concentrates attention on design of the product in order to keep pace with the design of the advertising. Exhibition design is only one among many stimuli in product design, but it is important.

It is abject defeatism to suggest that the goods can never live up to their stands. If we accepted that proposition we would never advance beyond "Britain Can Make It" and we would court just the same criticisms of the 1951 exhibitions as were levelled at our immediate post-war efforts. To say this is in no way to belittle the immense achievements of "Britain Can Make It," but in those days there was an obvious shortage of goods and it was inevitable—indeed it was intended—that the design of the display should, to a large extent, carry the show. Yet what was excusable in 1946 will be quite inexcusable in 1951. In that year the goods must match the exhibition.

The target will be high, to judge from the published names of the architects responsible for the exhibition buildings. Not in several generations has Britain been richer in designing talent than it is today. The young men who are preparing the Festival exhibitions will surprise the world with their imagination and ingenuity in the same way that Joseph Paxton startled his generation with the 1851 Crystal Palace. There need be no doubts about the kudos that these buildings will bring to Britain. The urgent question is whether the standards of quality and design of the exhibits will bring us equal credit.

We believe that industry will accept this challenge. We do not believe that the goods need always be at a disadvantage against the stands. Display designers would be the first to welcome goods to match their settings, but this equality must not be achieved by compromise in the one field of design in which this country has an outstanding lead. Rather our talent for display should be given still wider scope. The retail shop window is probably the only exhibition that the mass of the population ever sees and every retailer knows that ugly goods make ugly displays. Were all our stores in all our cities to launch a drive for better window displays, the cumulative demand for better goods with which to dress the windows could work miracles in the design of everyday things—and there would no longer be any call for such timid observations as that quoted at the head of this article.

P. R.

FIND THE

FUMBLES

We adopt Sir Charles Goodeve's phrase as headline for this article which lists some common failings in the functional design of furniture, cars, toys and electrical equipment

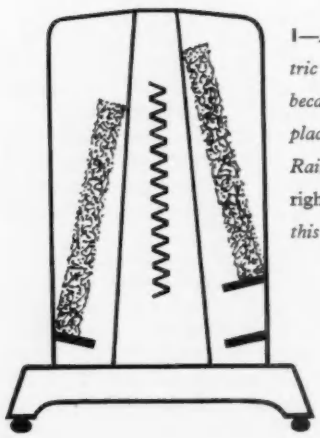
EVERY DESIGNER—and probably also every observant layman—can quote from his own knowledge at least one product that is badly designed. Writers and lecturers on design are ever ready to do so. The badness of design may lie in an inappropriateness of style, an error of taste; these faults are bad enough. What is perhaps even worse is the kind of bad design that prevents an article from doing efficiently the job that it is intended to do. There are still in production far more examples than there should be of such *functionally bad* design: the teapot with a dribbling spout, the gold cigarette-case that will not hold anything thicker than a Woodbine, the frying-pan with a handle so heavy that it tilts the whole pan—these and other things like them are only too familiar.

To such faults Sir Charles Goodeve, Director of the British Iron and Steel Research Association, has given the descriptive name of *fumbles*: "even the best designers, like the best cricketers, occasionally fumble the ball," he says. Unlike most people, Sir Charles has not merely made a mental note of design faults which he has seen in his professional work and in private life, but has made a list of them—a list which should be an *index expurgatorius* for British industry from now onwards. We publish extracts from it below, in the belief that publicity for a few present fumbles may help to lessen the number of fumbles in the future. We realise that publication may lead to our attention being drawn to other fumbles more numerous than DESIGN has space to mention, but the collective experience of readers in "finding the fumble" can be of great value to manufacturers and designers who are prepared to accept constructive criticism in the right spirit.

An alarming feature of the examples noted below is that in almost all cases they come from "good" manufacturers—firms with a high reputation, earned by quality of material and workmanship if not by quality of design. It would be easy, but pointless, to compile a list of faults by studying the products of fly-by-night firms in back-street premises: they have *not* been included in the examples which follow.

Electric toaster

First on the list is an electric toaster that failed to toast. Many toasters have this fault and others besides; but this particular model was well designed in other respects. It was made of suitable materials, it was simple and inexpensive to produce, and it was



1—*As marketed, the electric toaster was inefficient because the bread was placed too low* (left). *Raising the bracket,* as on right, *would have avoided this elementary design fault*

Copyright Heals

2—*For years, dressing tables have been made with mirrors hinged* somewhere near *the centre of gravity. But how many of them are hinged* exactly at *the centre of gravity, so that they stay in any position to which they are swivelled?*

good-looking: but it was hopelessly inefficient in the toaster's one function of making toast. The slices of bread placed in it were positioned far too low in relation to the heating element: the top of a slice was burnt before the bottom had even begun to turn brown.

The remedy for this fumble was simple, as one user found—to raise the bracket for the slices approximately an inch above its original position; but if the people who designed and made the toaster had properly tested their product, the fault would have been discovered *before* it was placed on the market and this effective but amateur modification would not have been necessary.

Dressing-table mirrors

Fumble No. 2 will be familiar to almost everyone who has stayed overnight in almost any commercial hotel. It relates to swivelling mirrors on dressing-tables. How often are they pivoted at the centre of gravity? How many searches for an old cigarette-packet or a piece of newspaper to jamb them into position would have been avoided, if they *were* so pivoted! If a mirror has no retaining catch, then unless it is attached to its frame at this critical level, it will not remain at the desired angle to which it is swivelled.

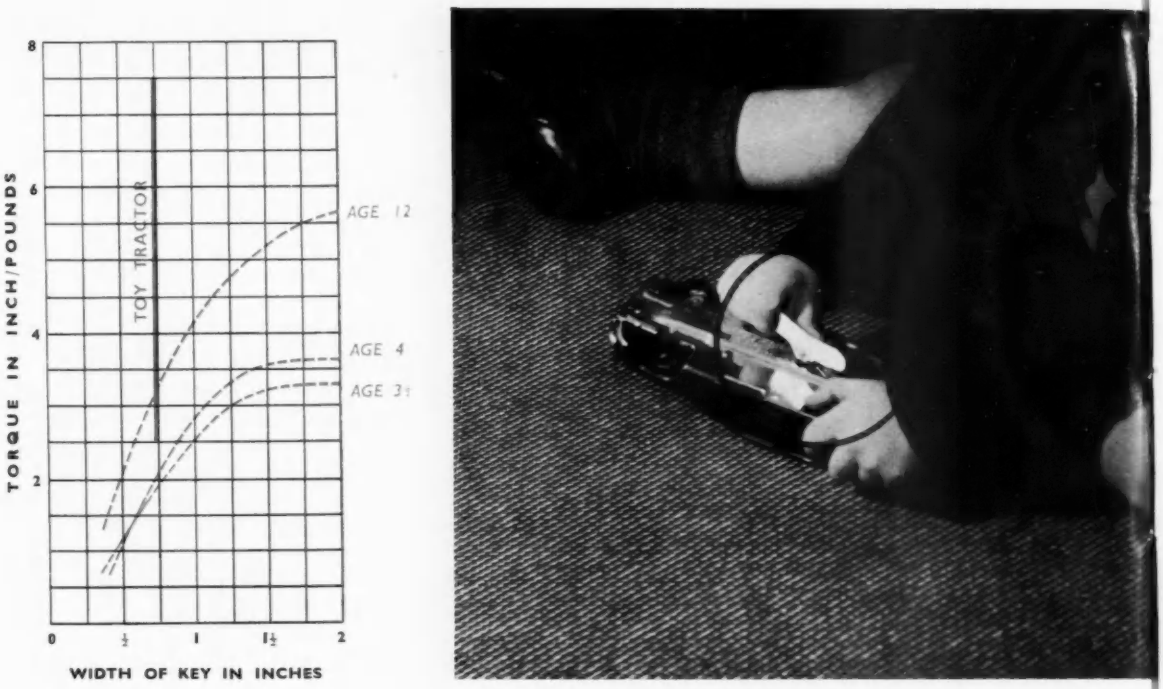
Motor-car doors

On many car doors there is a tongue or projection which fits into a corresponding groove or recess in the door frame, ensuring that they come together in the correct relative positions when the door is slammed shut, and that the bolt does *not* support its weight. If (as usually happens) this tongue is left unoiled, it will not continue indefinitely to work smoothly. If, on the other hand, it is oiled, then it is likely to make an oily mark on one's clothes when getting into or out of the car.

Recently a body-designer came within an ace of solving the problem implied here. Instead of using a single tongue he used two, one above the other. They were so close together that, if only they had been placed with their oiled surfaces facing one another, it would have been almost impossible to soil one's clothing on them without deliberately trying to do so. Unfortunately the designer did not realise this potential advantage: the twin tongues were arranged with their oiled sides facing outwards, and thus presented to the passenger the hazard of two oily surfaces instead of the usual one.

Clockwork winding-keys

Children's toys are a fruitful field—all too fruitful—for the seeker after elementary design faults. On many clockwork toys the winding-keys are so small that they cannot be fully wound by children of the age for which the toys are intended. One of Sir Charles Goodeve's graphs, reproduced here, shows the torque that had to be overcome in winding a toy tractor intended for a child of about four years old. The width of the key fitted was $\frac{3}{4}$ inch: with a key of this size a child of four could not even begin to wind it, and a child of twelve could not wind it much more than one-fifth of the way. A cheap and easy method of remedying the defect was to solder a halfpenny on each end of the key; but why should a toy manufacturer assume that his customers would take the trouble (or that they would have the halfpence) to make this



3—*This graph, showing the key winding-power of children of various ages, indicates the inadequate leverage given by the small keys often fitted to clockwork toys. Among honourable exceptions to this common failing is the Chad Valley remote-control car seen in the photograph, with key inserted ready for winding by a four-year-old boy. It is 2½ in. wide*

modification? If the designer of the toy was not lacking in imagination, he would ensure that the key was large enough for easy winding by a young child.

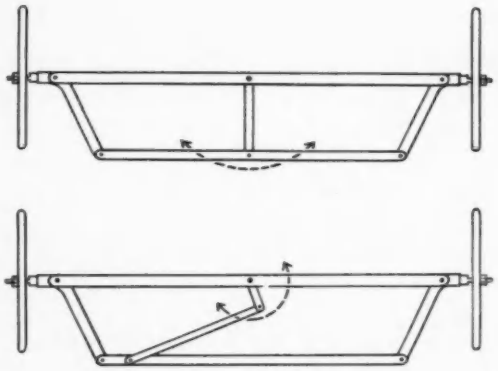
Toy pedal-cars

Toy pedal-cars frequently have steering mechanism that makes control unnecessarily difficult. . . . On a London bus, the ratio between turn of the steering wheel and turn of the road wheels is 20 to 1—that is to say, a 20° turn of the steering wheel will turn the front wheels through 1°. On private cars, the corresponding ratio is generally between 8 to 1 and 16 to 1.

In toy cars, on the other hand, it is not uncommon to find ratios of 1 to 2: a 1° turn of the steering wheel effects a 2° turn of the road wheels. On a typical pedal-car the steering wheel could be turned only 20° to each side of its "neutral" position (*Figure 4*). The addition of a link bar, as in lower picture, made it possible to utilise the whole travel of the steering wheel and correspondingly increased the leverage, so that the car was much lighter to steer. In fact, as a result of this modification, a child of suitable age had complete control of the car for the first time. This modification was made by the user: in another type of toy car, a similar link bar was incorporated as standard by the manufacturer, but it was fitted the reverse way round, thus putting the steering wheel at an even greater "mechanical disadvantage" in relation to the front wheels.

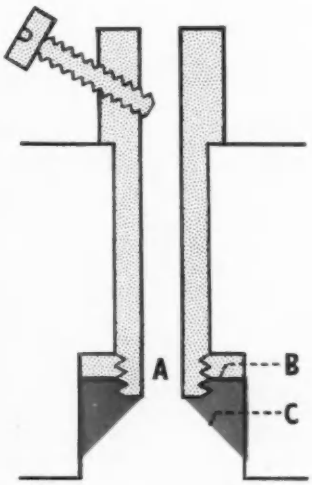
Electric switch-plugs

Another fumble (which must be the last of this selection) is more familiar to the electrician than to the layman or to the designer in other industries—but it is none the less a fumble for that. In installing a switch-plug the end of the mains wire—often a short and not very manageable end—has to be led into the



4—*With the steering linkage shown at top of page, a pedal car's steering wheel could be turned through 40° only. Fitting an extra link—as in lower diagram—enabled the full travel to be utilised. Table of ratios,* below, *tells its own story:*

	Degrees through which steering wheel has to be turned to effect a 10° alteration in angle of front wheels
LONDON BUS	200
PRIVATE CAR	80-160
TYPICAL TOY PEDAL-CAR	5
TOY PEDAL-CAR (RACER)	2.5



5—*Some types of switch-plug have no washer in the position indicated in brown* above, *and the electrician, trying to insert the end of a wire into the channel* **A**, *is in difficulty if, instead, it comes into contact with the recessed surface* **B**. *Where a washer is fitted, the inward tapering surface* **C** *serves as a guide*

channel A (*Figure 5*). It is far more likely to be brought to a stop by the recessed surface, of considerably larger area, represented by B. Yet this recess can easily be covered by an inward tapering surface, as C, in the form of a Tufnol washer or even a cardboard ring (no structural strength is required in this part); the whole surface then helps to guide the end of the wire into A, instead of obstructing it. The second shape is now standardised by some makers of switch-plugs, but there are others whose design departments have not yet progressed beyond the first shape.

Varied as these fumbles are—and there are others, equally varied, which will be equally familiar to readers—the reason underlying them all is the same: the designer has not used his imagination to gain an understanding of the user's point of view. The faults arise because neither the designer nor the manufacturer for whom he is working see themselves in the position of the user. They may have sound technical qualifications, they may have sound aesthetic judgment; their weakness lies in an inability to see their product through unprejudiced eyes—the eyes of someone who will spend his money on it, take it into his home (or office or workshop), and *use* it. The faults persist because people will go on buying fumbles until they learn better; and by the time they learn better, the manufacturer has already lost his market—unless *he* learns first.

There may well be a more fundamental cause, also, underlying unimaginative mechanical design—the fact that many products are today designed by people who lack either the breadth of vision or the practical approach which are both essential to good design. Perhaps this state of affairs is inevitable until design training facilities are improved. Meanwhile, the manufacturer who tries out his product not merely on his friends, but on people who are qualified to criticise —trained to find fumbles—will go a long way towards avoiding the worst faults.

How and why

the makers of this tea and coffee set used consultant designers' services for the first time

AS MANUFACTURERS OF products ranging from kitchen units to hospital metal ware Andrews Bros (Bristol) Ltd can claim to be widely experienced in the fabrication of stainless steel. In the past they have designed their own products: for the latest addition to their range they have for the first time introduced consultant designers to work in close collaboration with their technical staff.

This variation in policy is due to circumstances in which other manufacturers in other industries are equally likely to find themselves at some time or other: Andrews Brothers plan to introduce a new line (stainless steel tableware) which is intended for a rather different market from the rest of their products, with different channels of retail distribution—and with competition to be met from a different direction; in this instance, from the makers of silver and silver-plated wares. In the firm's own words, they "are not too proud to acknowledge that designing is a specialised calling"; and they have turned to designers with wide experience of working in silver. Their new tea set is intended mainly for the home market and the coffee set mainly for export—with an eye to America especially. Their design development has proceeded step by step, with close relationship between design and production teams at all stages:

Stainless steel is so hard that in domestic use it is virtually unscratchable; the well-rounded shapes of this table ware ensure that it does not *look* hard. Lids are interchangeable

1

The story begins with a query from Andrews Brothers' technical director, Mr Leonard V. Rosser, to the Design and Research Centre of the silver industry. The firm was put into touch with a number of designers, among them Kenneth Holmes and N. R. G. Poynton of the Leicester College of Art, who were eventually commissioned to design the sets.

2

They visited Andrews Brothers' factory to see for themselves the type of plant available and by first-hand acquaintance to add to their knowledge of the special difficulties of working in stainless steel.*

At this time the technicians discussed fully with the designers the production methods that could be employed. Spinning the bodies of the vessels in halves and subsequently welding these together was considered, but this possible technique was rejected because it would have left a seam, difficult to efface in stainless steel. It was decided that the bodies could be pressed from sheet metal to a straight-sided cylindrical form in power presses and finally finished by methods whereby it was practical for the vessels to have a greater diameter in the middle than at the end.

3

Briefed with the necessary technical data, the designers prepared sketches for all the pieces making up the set—obviously an important stage in the proceedings, its length bearing no relation to the brief space that can be devoted to it here.

4

After approval of sketches a prototype tea and coffee set was made by hand in the designers' workshops—in silver with turned wooden handles.

5

From this first model and working drawings prepared by the designers, a second prototype, in stainless steel, was made in Andrews' factory.

NON-DRIP SPOUT. MADE FROM PRESSINGS
DETACHABLE LID FOR EASY CLEANING
IVORY-WHITE HANDLE IN ICI UREA-FORMALDEHYDE, RIVETED
CONTINUOUS RADIUSING : NO CORNERS
AMPLE CLEARANCE BETWEEN HANDLE AND BODY OF TEA POT

6

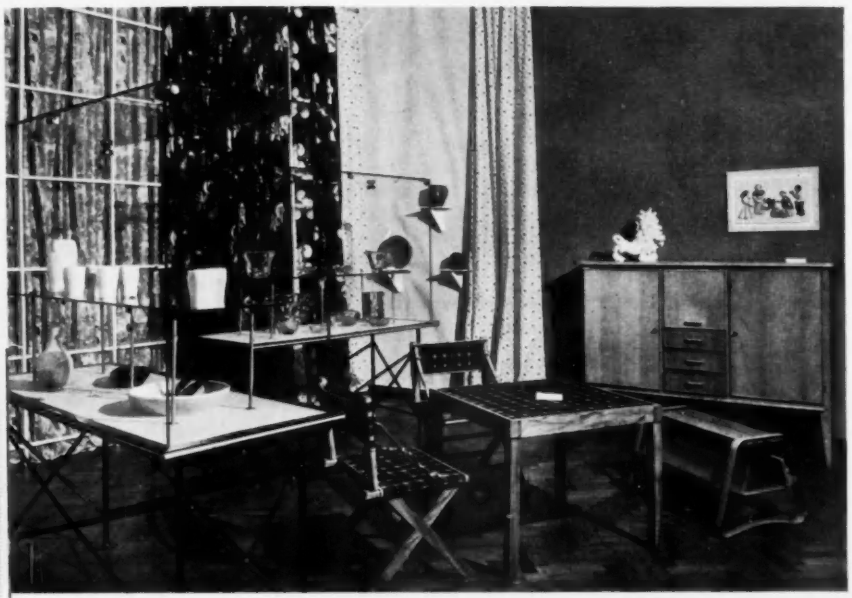
As the next (and final) stage in the preliminaries to production came tooling. The press tools needed were already in existence, but the finishing tools had to be made. At the same time moulding tools were ordered for the ivory-white urea handles.

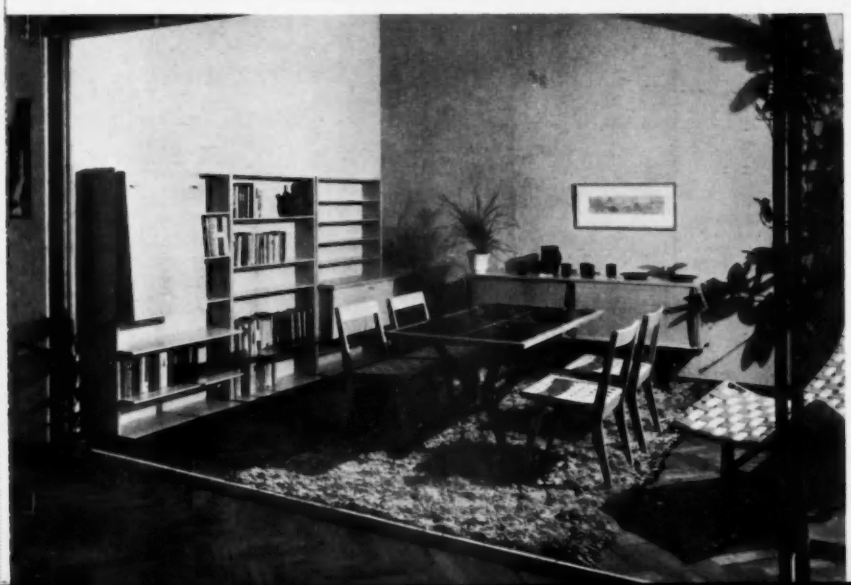
Design and marketing

Thus briefly can the design of the sets in relation to their *production* be summarised. Design has also been carefully considered in relation to *marketing*. Although stainless-steel tea sets carry a purchase tax of only 33⅓ per cent in the home market as against 100 per cent on silver or silver plate, a set such as Andrews' cannot be cheap: its retail price, for three pieces and a circular tray, will be about 17 guineas. It was essential therefore that the sets should neither feel nor *look* cheap; the material used is of generous weight, and both the continuous curvature of the metal bodies and the decorative nature of their plastic handles and knobs were deliberately planned to humanise the hard cold look that is natural to stainless steel. A hygienic look appropriate to the hospital is perhaps less welcome at the tea table.

In the marketing campaign on which Andrews Brothers are now embarking, one of the worst enemies they will have to fight is the failure of the public as a whole to realise that stainless steel—unlike the "chrome" with which they are more familiar—is not a plating but a solid metal that remains stainless all through. Yet this quality, the virtual unscratchability of steel and the character of the new design are potentially their staunchest allies.

* Characteristics of the metal are (*a*) extreme hardness (*b*) poor heat-conductivity: in both of these it is very different from silver.





Report from Holland—I

Exhibition in Amsterdam

THE RECENT jubilee exhibition of the Bond Voor Kunst in Industrie (Union for Art in Industry) held in Amsterdam was a disappointment for anyone who had hoped to assess there the trends in current industrial design on the Continent, for the emphasis in most sections was on the arts and crafts—on hand-thrown studio pots, hand-carved wooden jugs, eccentric and expensive leather-thonged furniture, intaglio carved glass cameos, hand-tufted rugs and even hand-stuffed animal mascots, often interesting or amusing enough in themselves, but quite out of context in a display announced as an international exhibition of industrial design.

By contrast the British section,* organised jointly by the British

FROM THREE COUNTRIES

Top of page: A section of the Dutch display showing contemporary furniture designed by R. van Daalen and A. van der Sande for 't Spectrum, Bergeyk. The mirror of the dressing-table folds forward to give a flush natural mahogany table-top

A group of French furniture (*centre*) selected by the Societé des Artistes Decorateurs, Paris. The table, chairs and low bookcase are inexplicably garnished with expensive leather strapping; on the bookcase the leather is saddle-stitched over a bent steel frame

This Swiss bay was staged by the Zürich firm, Wohnbedarf A.G. The chairs are American designs made under licence in Switzerland. The table has a criss-cross under-framing of knock-down construction for flat packing. The sideboard sliding panels are faced with sisal matting

Council and the Council of Industrial Design, showed nothing that was not designed for quantity production by industrial processes. It earned, from the Dutch organisers, the compliment of being called "The British Lesson." This was a recognition perhaps that the British attitude to industrial design may be further developed than in some European countries.

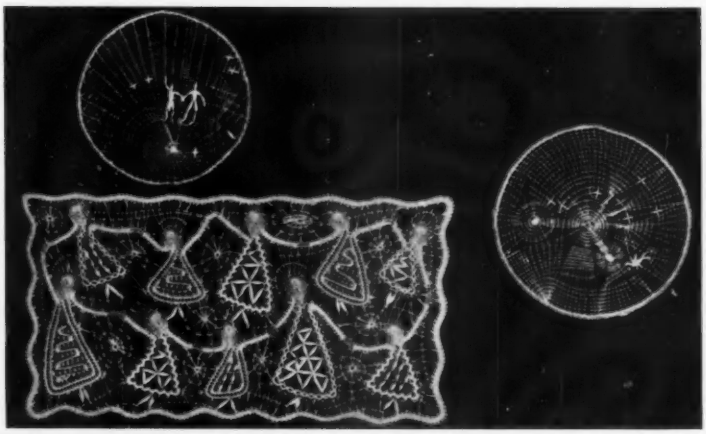
Because the foreign sections were probably unrepresentative of their countries (the Swiss bay showed some Finnish furniture and American chair designs manufactured under licence) it might be unwise to draw conclusions; but in this exhibition there was certainly no evidence that Continental designers have found any new approach or style which is likely to leave a mark on European taste. In the Dutch silverware, for instance, there were lingering traces of the influence of the 1925 Paris Exhibition; a Belgian tea service, striving after novelty, was practically airborne by its streamlining; a Dutch linen tablecloth in two tones of grey was marred by a modernistical jazz pattern, and a French card-table was masquerading in a Scottish tartan. (There is currently a vogue for tartan styles in Paris, where their plaid patterns have spread from women's clothes to furnishing fabrics—including those used in the upholstery of some of the popular-priced French cars—and even to dog-leads.)

Among the Dutch exhibits only the glass designed for the Leerdam Glasfabriek by A. D. Copier, some finely packed stationery for G. H. Buhrmann's Papiergroothandel, Amsterdam, and the printed cottons designed by Frits Wichard for De Ploeg, Bergeyk, showed any fresh inspiration. They were among the few products that could properly be called industrial. As so often happens in exhibitions, the setting, designed by the Dutch architects A. Bodon and H. Salomonson, was more distinguished than the exhibits.

P. R.

* Part of this section was illustrated on the front cover of DESIGN for May.

Dutch cream coloured earthenware tea service designed by Bert Nienhuis for Goedewaagen, Gouda



Three novel lace designs from Czechoslovakia which attracted attention for their departure from conventional floral patterns

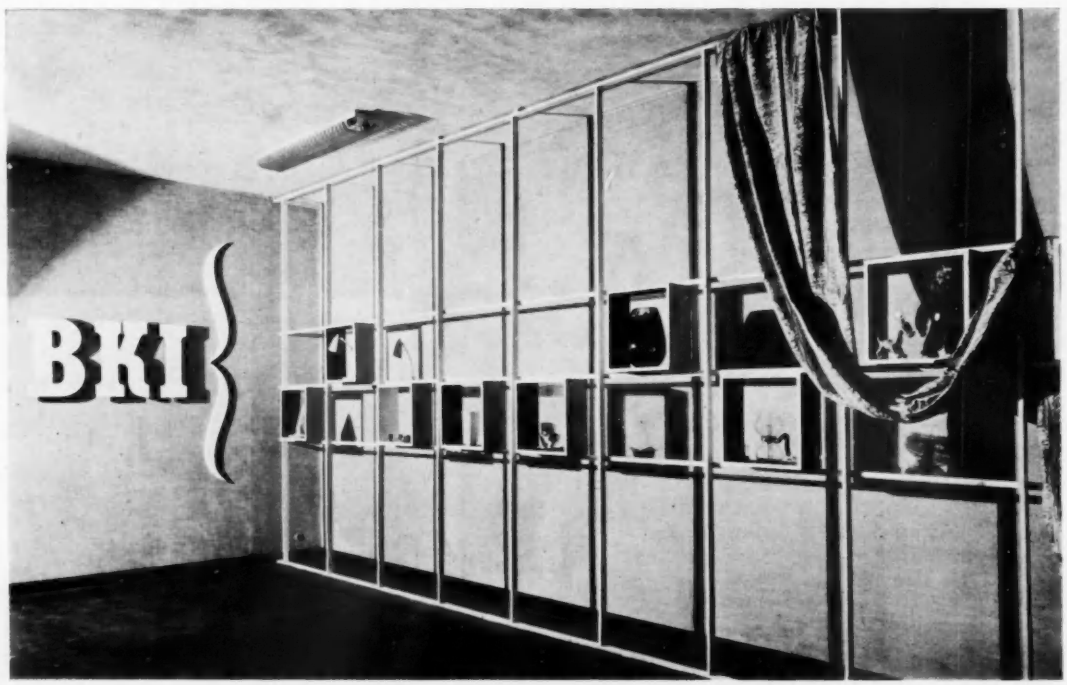
The entrance to the exhibition in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam showing Gouda pottery and Leerdam glass in cases on right and an end feature designed by architect Otto Treuman

Hitler's taste is still alive

by PAUL REILLY

THERE ARE TWO powerful design trends competing for leadership in Holland. The interesting point is that they are both contemporary in that neither of them harks back to a past style, but their sources none the less are very different. One might be said to derive from the machine and the other from handicrafts. This conflict is by no means peculiar to the Netherlands. It is to be found in Switzerland, in Sweden and in the United States. The fact that it is not so marked in Britain may be due to economic causes, but the day will come when British designers and manufacturers will feel these pressures. That will be their opportunity to develop their own contemporary tradition, for an unresolved dichotomy (to use a favoured American expression) cannot last.

The clearest statement I have yet seen of this divided design allegiance was in the private office of a Long Island manufacturer who had built himself two walls of glass bricks and two of rough hewn planks, thereby presumably reconciling his urge for the contemporary with his nostalgia for the log cabin. But the same conflict was in evidence last month in Amsterdam in an exhibition in the city's largest department store. The Bijenkorf is a medium-price store



This clear, spare display in the BKI exhibition "Goed Maar Mooi" (*Useful but Beautiful*) shows no traces of peasant taste; it is contemporary in the pre-Hitler German tradition

with a determined design policy—a policy of leadership towards contemporary furniture and furnishings. It gave up a complete floor to a series of small furnished rooms suited to present-day standards of living. The furniture was all in scale with the rooms; the furnishings were brightly modern; the pictures on the walls were mainly abstract compositions, all eminently contemporary, but none the less throughout the rooms there was an uneasy wrestling between two separate tendencies.

One might be called the international school of functional design, simple and aseptic, relying on logical solutions to domestic problems—the kind of design that came out of pre-Hitler Germany, from the *Bauhaus* at Dessau, and spread so rapidly in architecture across two hemispheres. The other strain is currently referred to on the Continent as the *Heimat* (homely) style—a sort of Cosy Comfort Farm modernism, which received Hitler's blessing in Germany.

"International"—in one sense only

In the Bijenkorf exhibition this *Heimat Kunst* was much in evidence in the week-end villa rooms. It is seen in many of the new hotels in Switzerland, where the furniture and decoration have an artificial peasant quality. It is echoed in some modern American furniture, particularly in pieces for the "rumpus" room. But it is international only in the sense that Hitler's reaction against the *Bauhaus* was forcibly spread through occupied Europe; even the two European neutrals, Sweden and Switzerland, were not immune. Indeed, much of the present impetus towards the *Heimat* style derives from the fact that Sweden, which before the war had established its own design leadership in Europe, became during the war years so dependent upon the Germany economy. This cottage modernism is now being re-exported from Sweden. An observant Dutch critic, who in the early 1930's had built the most outstanding modern factory in

Another lean display at the BKI exhibition with a sharp, mechanical quality, off-setting the many hand-thrown pots

The conflict between the two contemporary trends is well marked in the exhibition living-room *above* shown in the Amsterdam store De Bijenkorf. Note the abstract painting and the precise machine-made light fitting on the one hand and the peasant roughness of the fireplace and ceiling on the other. The chairs probably derive from Indonesian handicrafts

This dining alcove in De Bijenkorf is rather more sophisticated than the room above, but the two trends are clear: light fitting, abstract painting and possibly the upper half of the sideboard in one manner; the milking-stool legs of the sideboard, the table and chairs in the other. The chairs are modelled on the English Windsor tradition, but were made in Finland by Keravan Punteolisuus and assembled in Holland by Ums N.V. of Utrecht. The window grille stems from yet another source—possibly Hollywood film décor

Europe, remarked to me that Hitler's influence in design is more alive today than it ever was, for it is now endowed with a Scandinavian prestige.

The "folksy" and the intellectual

There is no doubting the appeal of this *Heimat* style. It is homely and easy to understand; it is traditional in the sense that barns and farm buildings are traditional; it will infiltrate the "Borax" market far more quickly than its more sophisticated competitor; it has an obvious familiarity and cosiness which the functional school has too often lacked; it will have an appeal in every country where folklore and folk art survive. But it is basically insincere; it is quite unsuited to contemporary town dwellings, whether flats or terrace houses; it is on a par with that rustic furniture which is so frequently found in urban gardens. It is, in fact, an idle compromise between the arts and crafts and the machine. My same Dutch critic has even detected a relationship between the return of comfortable rations in Holland and the spread of this facile *Heimat Kunst*.

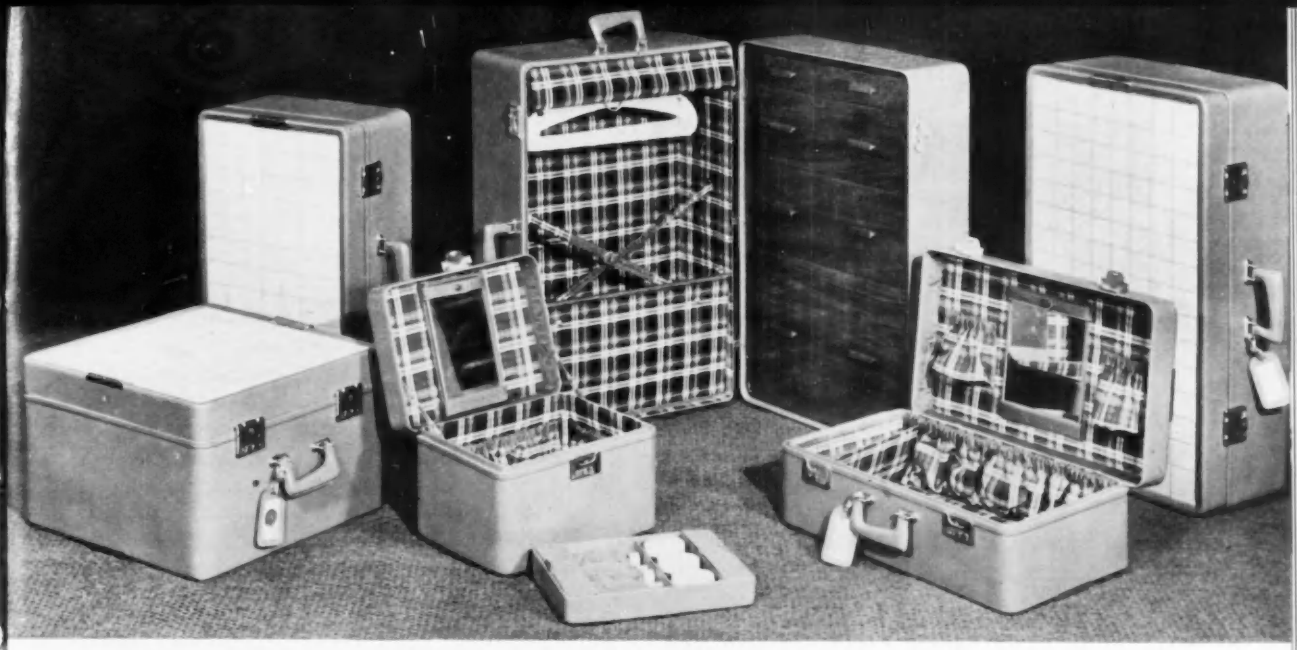
Whereas the *Heimat* style has an earthy, "folksy" quality, its competitor is severely intellectual. The contrast was well seen in the Exhibition of Industrial Design organised by the Nederlandsche Bond Voor Kunst in Industrie at the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum. Here the setting was contemporary in the manner of the international school, an exercise in self-control and simplicity, a functional backcloth against which to show the exhibits.

Opportunity for British designers

We are familiar with examples of this approach. We have seen glass walls and skeletal furniture; flat plain surfaces with a few asymmetrical abstractions for light relief; the all-pervasive sense of the machine; the chill logic of the intellectual designer. It was an admirable antidote to what went before, but it lacked humanity and charm. This quality of charm is at the root of the conflict in the post-war European developments—it is the missing link in contemporary design. The intellectuals, in their pre-war purge of inessentials, discounted it. The *Heimat* school today exploits it outrageously. Somewhere between the two extremes we may find the real "contemporary idiom." Perhaps it may fall to British designers to find the answer and to show it to the world in 1951. They start with these advantages—they were isolated for the six years of the war from the seductions of Hitler's peasant taste, and they can draw on a long experience of urban living and machine production.

Two styles at one table: the coarse glazed earthenware breakfast set and tankards hanging on wooden pegs are pure *Heimat* style; the bent plywood chairs and the table with curved plywood legs derive from factory processes. Furniture designed for Dutch firm "My Home" by designers Alous and Jansen

This light wood, quantity-produced unit furniture owes something to the *Bauhaus*, but has a solidity which is characteristically Dutch



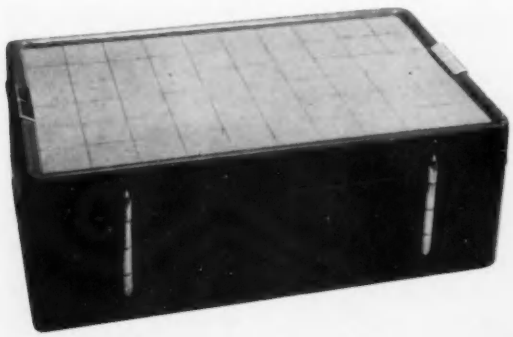
Shown here are the six pieces comprising the ladies' luggage set. The top and bottom of each case are designed in a draft-board pattern—brown tooling on a biscuit-coloured hide. Linings are of taffeta silk tartan

NEW LUGGAGE, NEW STYLE

AN UNUSUAL AND striking design in matching luggage sets for men and women has been achieved by Papworth Industries of Cambridge, in collaboration with Mr Douglas Scott. Apart from being good-looking, the luggage is light and rigid with locks and hinges of smooth form, and no unsightly corners.

Top grain cow-hide on an aero plywood foundation is the material used and an aluminium channelled frame in the lid and body gives added strength. Joints in the foundation are combed and bonded with a special glue and despite underwater tests for three or four months at a time there is no sign of their deterioration.

The ladies' set comprises a wardrobe, 29in. and 24in. long suitcases, a 21in. long weekend case, an 18in. hat case and a 13½in. long train case. The men's matching set consists of 26in. and 20in. long valises and 18in. brief/overnight bag.



Hinges on the back of the case shown *above* are of special interest as they have been designed to act also as buffers. The three-piece matching set for men is shown on the *right*

Shoe retailers establish a Design Studio

MERCHANDISE PLAYS A CENTRAL PART IN FAR-REACHING DESIGN POLICY

IN AN EXPLANATORY LEAFLET intended mainly for the firm's own staff and suppliers, the purpose of the new Dolcis footwear-design studio is summed up in a brief phrase that could hardly be bettered: *to convert ideas into designs for shoes. . . .* This definition covers the two sides of the studio's activities—the creation of original designs, followed by their development to the production stage; and the adaptation of ideas that come from outside sources.

Such adaptation is desirable, both to meet the demands of the particular market aimed at, and to make best use of the manufacturing facilities available in the various factories that make shoes for Dolcis (including the firm's own factories, which produce about one-fifth of the total).

The design of shoes is not governed solely by considerations of function—nor even function and good taste; it is affected also, and largely, by fashion. An awareness of fashion trends (which, whether we like it or not, generally originate outside Britain) is therefore essential to the success of a design department in the shoe trade in this country. The Dolcis organisation is well equipped to obtain, and to centralise in its design studio, information on world style trends. In the form of sample shoes, buyers' and correspondents' reports, fashion magazines and news-cuttings, this information comes from Paris and New York and Hollywood—centres which influence fashion generally; and from others which influence *shoe* fashion particularly; *e.g.*, from Florence and from the Swiss *bottiers*.

When an idea, from inside or outside the studio, is considered suitable for development, it is discussed as a manufacturing proposition with Dolcis' suppliers.

Vehicles:
This Bedford van, like other recent additions to the company's fleet, follows Dolcis house style in its lettering and colour scheme (two shades of brown)

Miss Eunice Wilson, newly-appointed staff designer, has had (besides three years at Birmingham College of Arts and Crafts) six years' experience in the footwear industry: obviously a desirable qualification for someone who has to discuss production problems with manufacturers. Besides expert knowledge of the specialities of the different shoe-making districts, acquaintance with the types of plant and grades of labour available is required, if promising ideas are to become saleable, wearable realities.

The establishment of a design studio is only one aspect—though a most important aspect—of the "distinctively Dolcis" design policy, which owes much to the initiative of the firm's managing director, Major F. J. Stratton. Other manifestations of this policy are the latest Dolcis premises, packages, letterheads and motorvans. Especially noticeable is the standardisation, wherever appropriate, of a distinctive style of lettering for the firm's name, and a two-colour scheme of fawn and medium brown.

Comment: "Retailer's Influence," p. 24

Picture of Dolcis Design Studio, *front cover*

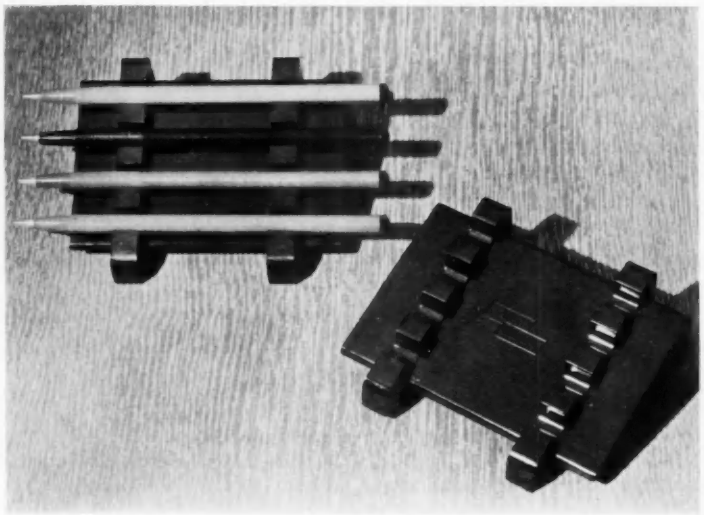
Knightsbridge
London SW

Premises: Not the newest Dolcis shop—nor the most handsome in its facia lettering—this branch is typical of many in important shopping centres up and down the country

Products: Typical shoes from the Dolcis range, designed partly or wholly in the firm's studio, are illustrated *below; at top of facing page; on front cover*

Packaging: ***The widespread redesign scheme has already affected the firm's shoe boxes. New box, above, is "distinctively Dolcis." Below it is one of several patterns in use previously***

Design news in pictures



MOULDED PEN-STAND

A NEW TYPE of desk stand for holding Biro Minor pens (or other pens or pencils of similar dimensions) has been designed by W. M. de Majo and L. Bramberg. It is made of Bakelite plastic and despite its apparently complex shape it is moulded in a single operation.

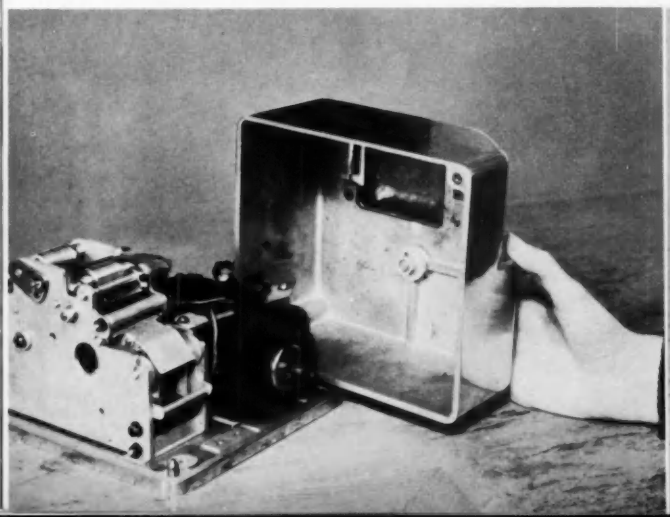
Retail selling price is *2s 9d* and it may be obtained in solid black, mottled walnut or mottled green. The original Biro pen stand was circular and held the pens in an upright position.

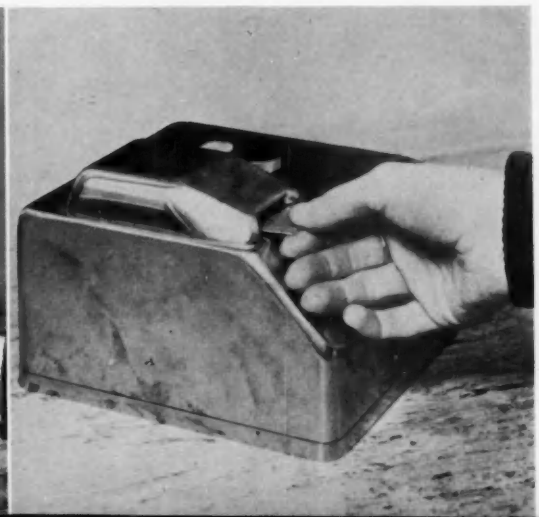
ELECTRIC TICKET-DATER

THE USE OF a new method of operation in a railway ticket-dating machine has brought about a complete change in appearance, by comparison with the machines in general use. In these, dates are stamped manually and the machine has to be fairly tall to allow for downwards pressure. The new model, on the other hand, is electrically operated and needs only to be "fed" by the booking clerk; the ticket goes through the feed rollers in a horizontal position and is ejected on the same level at the other side. Hence the dating machine is comparatively flat; it can, in fact, be fitted flush with the surface of the booking-office counter if required.

An advantage of the new machine is that the date can be impressed right *into* the ticket, thanks to the extra pressure which can be used. The whole mechanism comes under regular observation when the top is removed—a half-turn of the central knob releases the entire top cover.

The prototype machine was designed jointly by the Commercial Superintendent's Research Section, Eastern Region, British Railways, and the Bell Punch Co Ltd (and manufactured by the latter), and is undergoing tests in a recently redesigned booking office at Bowes Park.





EDUCATIONAL TOY

THIS MINIATURE FILM-STRIP projector, produced by Common Ground Ltd, is made of pressed steel and stove-enamelled in a range of colours. It weighs only 5¼ ounces, measures about 5in. × 5in. × 3in., and has been designed to use standard torch bulbs and battery (though it can use mains power, through a transformer).

Described by its makers as "an educational toy," the Cineflash uses 35-mm film, and can project a picture 3 feet square.

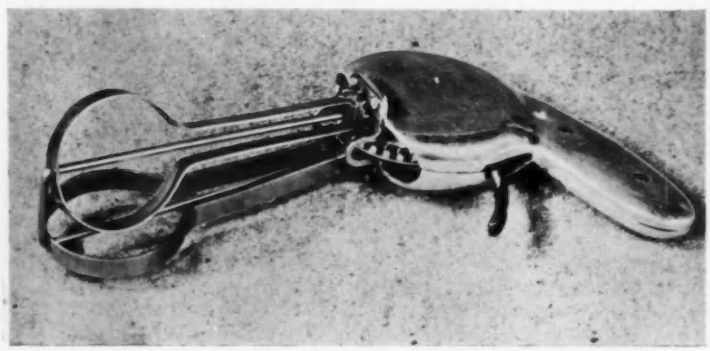
Designers of the projector were Mr J. F. Konig, FIMechE, Mr M. F. Barrett and Mr C. F. Rawnsley, and of the pack Mr M. Goaman, FSIA, and Mr M. C. Alexander. The box is made by Johns, Son & Watts Ltd, and lithographed in three colours.

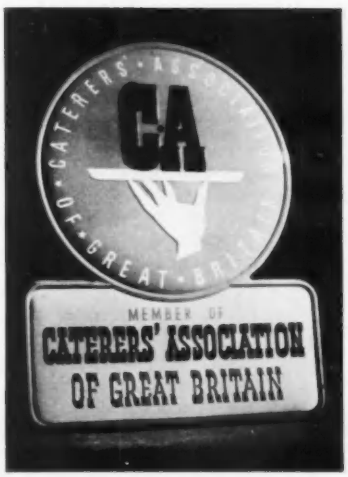
Retail selling price is 15*s* complete with bulb and two film-strips.

ONE-HANDED WHISK

A TRIGGER-OPERATED egg and batter whisk which can be worked with one hand has been designed by Mr F. W. Vernall, an engineer, of Hatfield, Herts. It is easier to work than most whisks—and no worse-looking. When the trigger is pulled back, it sets a flywheel turning at about 80 r.p.m., which in turn drives the blades at approximately 250 r.p.m. (The speed can be increased, but this has been found satisfactory even for stiff mixtures.)

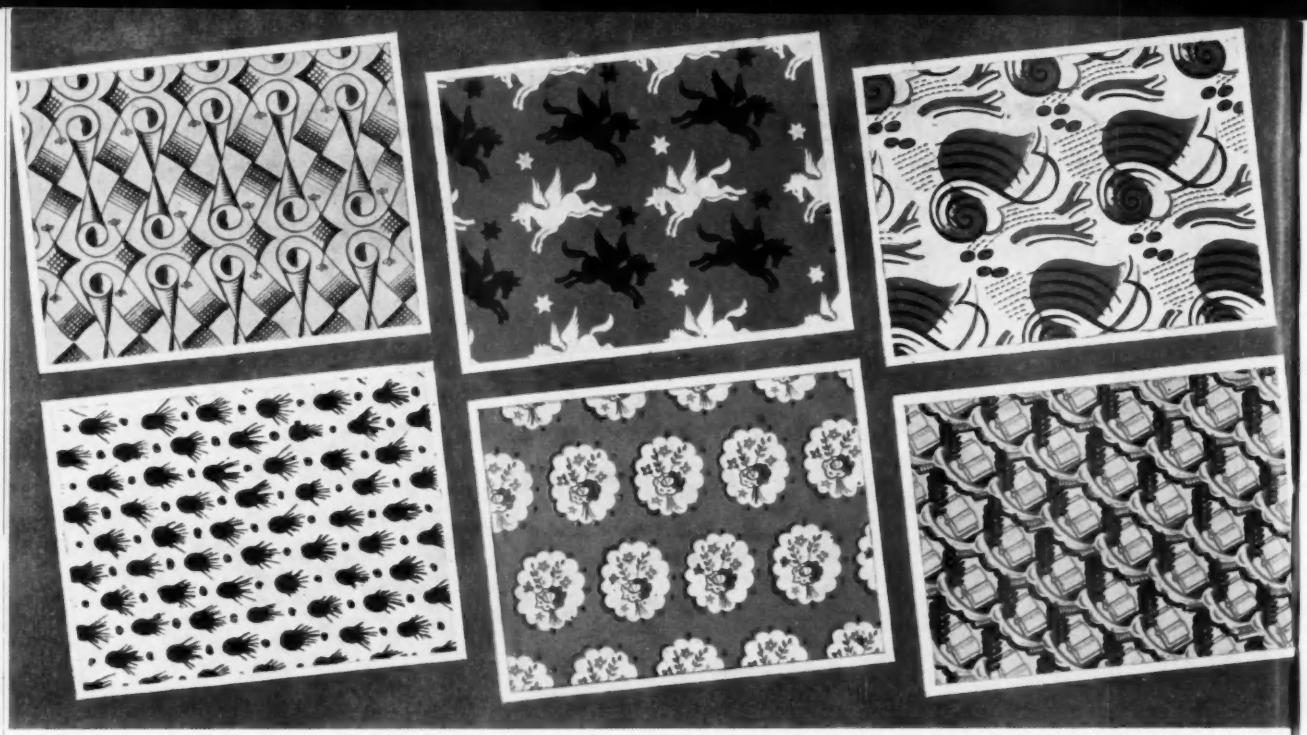
The whisk is not yet in production, but Mr Vernall estimates that by using pressure die-castings and producing in quantity it could be marketed for less than 7*s* 6*d*. The handle would probably be of aluminium and the blades of tin-coated brass.





SYMBOL

SHOWN ABOVE is one of two showcards for members of the Caterers' Association of Great Britain, embodying the Association's new symbol and designed by Mr Reginald Mount for Design Research Unit Ltd. Makers: Acme Showcard & Sign Co Ltd.



PATTERNS on paper

Designers of the cover papers from the Sylvia range, shown above, are—top row, left to right—*Stanley Hickson, Valerie J. Bott, Stanley Hickson;* bottom row, left to right—*Joan Aldridge, Phyllis Reilly, Thomas J. Swindlehurst. They are available in various colour-schemes besides those illustrated.* Below, *some other patterns from the same range are shown in use as book covers: they are also suitable for book endpapers and as box cover-papers or in other packaging applications*

THERE IS TODAY a more widespread appreciation of pattern—particularly in typography, wallpapers and textiles—than in the recent past; more attention is given to it in schools, with potato cuts, lino-cuts and fabric printing. The wallpaper exhibition of May 1945 made many people aware of delightful spots and stripes in various sizes and abstract and floral units.

John Mason, bookbinder, felt recently that a demand had arisen for a variety of all-purpose papers, sophisticated, playful and patterned "marble." He found a need for them himself, as new papers for covers; among students, apprentices and amateur bookbinders; and in the boxmakers' demand for an interesting change from the plain surfaces common during the war years. He accordingly commissioned a number of young artists, all interested in pattern but with very different viewpoints, to produce a selection of papers that could be reproduced by lithography in a variety of two-colour combinations. These are now being marketed under the trade name of Sylvia Papers. They reflect the contemporary spirit in design; their colours are generally good, clean and light-hearted. They are now being applied to Linson bookbinding fabric, as well as paper. They have, moreover, led to demands from various publishing houses for exclusive patterns by the same designers.

Letters

Mr A. Whitaker's article "Design in Industry is a team job," published in our April issue, has created much interest. Two of the letters we have received on the subject are published below

SIR: In the April issue of DESIGN I read with the very greatest interest Mr Whitaker's definition of what he considers to be the correct method of practising industrial design. So many people have tried to prescribe a *modus operandi* for design in industry, yet many of these prescriptions, both in written and verbal form, seem to have been based only on theories and ideals, because those who have written them are not, in fact, either practising designers themselves or engineers dealing with large manufacturers.

Since in the past Mr Whitaker and I have exchanged opinions on the subject of design, I feel I can appreciate the significance and excellence of his article all the more, and I should say that he is nearer the mark in his article than anyone has yet been. Yet in my experience with our company, which designs for some of the largest manufacturers of their kind in the country, it seems to me that he is not exactly right. I would emphasise that what I have to say is a matter of experience and not just opinion. Furthermore, these observations refer only to products outside the decorative industries such as textiles, pottery, glass and jewellery.

Why teamwork is necessary

I heartily agree with Mr Whitaker that no one man, either inside or outside industry, can possibly carry out design on his own. I do not agree, however, with the reason he gives—namely, that the designer or consultant designer must have a team of technicians alongside him to tell him what he can or cannot do with materials and in production methods. This "team" idea has been put forward in text-books and lectures on design so often, and it always appears to me to be an excuse for the shortcomings of the artist who pleases to call himself an industrial or consultant designer. In fact, a so-called designer who has to depend on technical support may more likely be a commercial artist exploiting territory which is foreign to him in the manufacturing world. Every line of a design so much depends upon the production method by which that line will be realised that it is impossible for anybody to design anything unless he knows engineering and manufacturing thoroughly.

I would suggest that the reason why no one man can carry out design on his own is simply that there are only 24 hours in a day and he must have considerable assistance in sheer volume of work.

Moreover, I am afraid I disagree with Mr Whitaker in that I know that, given the necessary period of years and the inherent ability and talent, it *is* possible for *one* man to acquire very deep knowledge of and experience with all the major processes involved in manufacture. A very large part of a designer's life is occupied by the vital quest for more knowledge and more experience to keep abreast of manufacturing and raw material developments.

I agree with Mr Whitaker absolutely and completely when he implies that it is not the slightest good for anyone in the design world to imagine for one moment that he can work from a sort of throne, propped up by publicity and exhibitions, and to pretend that it is a privilege for manufacturers to employ him. The real product designer, although he may work in a separate design concern such as ours, does become in effect one of the personnel of the manufacturer for whom he is designing, sharing all manufacturing and production problems. I believe much harm to the drive for better design in British products has been done by pseudo-designers trying to "wriggle in" on industry under the cloak name of "industrial designer." I believe, also, that such people have had their day, such as it was; now industry will only take notice of and employ the designer who is at once a thoroughgoing engineer and, at the same time, possesses trained aesthetic talent. They are rare birds, but real designers of this nature always were rare, and always will be, because of the exacting "specification" up to which they must match.

C. H. GOLDING
Managing Director
F. B. Elcom Ltd

London W1

SIR: The article written by Mr Whitaker in the April issue of DESIGN has been read, with great interest, by all members of this organisation and it is felt that Mr Whitaker has really only touched the fringe of a problem which we know exists in industry today.

Scope for consultants

It is all very well for examples to be shown of how a staff designer fits into the team in developing a new project, but, whilst this applies to very large industrial organisations, I think Mr Whitaker has rather overlooked the very many manufacturing concerns who are producing products through the medium of outside assistance, as their own organisations are such that they cannot carry the various executives outlined in, for example, Mr Buckingham's chart.

We are carrying out commissions for both large and small manufacturers, and our experience has shown that the consultant industrial designer can work equally well as a member of a design team in such an organisation, as suggested, as operating and becoming solely responsible for certain projects which are designed for a smaller organisation.

One must not overlook the fact that the industrial design profession in this country today is relatively young and, therefore, there has not been an opportunity for either education or experience to develop designers to a stage where they fully appreciate what is required of an industrial designer.

The statement that there should be a dozen designers employed in industry for each one consultant designer is of course an ideal, but I feel sure it will be two or three generations before this state of affairs is reached, if for no other reason than that these persons simply do not exist.

Certain large organisations have, in their engineering departments, full-time designers, but, with all due respect, they suffer a severe handicap in making their contribution to the product which is being designed because, generally speaking, they do not hold a position of executive rank and are therefore obliged to bow to the dictates of the management. The consultant designer is not hampered by this restriction and is completely free to contribute in an unbiased manner.

We fully agree that a very close liaison between all those concerned in the development of a product is essential and one must face the position today and try and make the best of it. It is clearly the responsibility of the consultant industrial designer to co-operate in a practical way with the manufacturer's design team and in the same way he should be in a position to control design for those organisations which have neither the need nor the wherewithal to use a full-time staff of their own. There are, for example, many organisations producing products which have a very long production run where, for economic reasons, there is no need for a resident industrial designer.

This brings us right back to the old problem of the industrial designer being upheld as a genius and being in a position to solve everyone's problem, not only from the design and development angle, but also to promote sales and all the other problems associated with market research.

In conclusion, we feel that Mr Whitaker has very clearly stated his case, and we would feel very happy if responsible executives in industry had the same approach to industrial design and understood it as well as he.

B. G. BOWDEN
Managing Director
Allen-Bowden Ltd

Leamington Spa

New look for men?

SIR: The matter of men's underwear and shirts might well be a subject for discussion in your monthly journal. For many years I have advocated that underwear for men should have a special consideration by the designers.

For a long time they have turned out the same sort of article, and we now have a choice, in shirts, of striped or plain. Underwear can be obtained (only at a few shops) in white silk, and the style is unimaginative.

Last year I had occasion to visit the American Zone of Germany, and in their PX stores many varieties of colourful, stylish and comfortable underwear could be purchased. I feel certain that our designers could produce something equal or even better than this, and at the same time find a ready market.

L. C. JAYES
Managing Director
Lasts Ltd

Leicester

• Here is a consumer's point of view on the same subject. The writer is the organiser of a "Modern Look" Men's Wear Circle:

SIR: In respect of brighter men's clothes for spring and summer: men have never been catered for seriously insofar as really sensible light outerwear [is concerned]. I can only lay the blame for this lack of enterprise at the feet of the men's wear trade for their failure to be progressively-minded.

Why are so many men not interested in their clothes? Is it the fact that men's outerwear is so sombre-looking? Heavy sports jackets, heavy flannels, are out of date nowadays; what is needed is light suits of mercerised linen, rayon, alpaca and shantung in various colours and designs.

Let us see also full ranges of colours in men's underwear in all the men's wear shops. Personal health and hygiene for mere man should be the keynote for the future of his clothes in general.

O. J. BRIDGMAN

Bromley, Kent

Power-operated doors

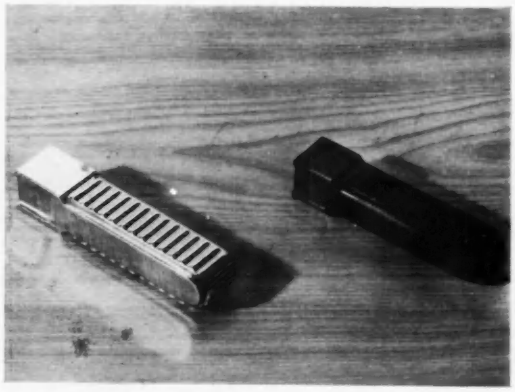
SIR: I have read with interest the reference in your March issue to the power-actuated doors incorporated by London Transport in its latest experimental double-deck coach.

You, Sir, and no doubt many of your readers will be familiar with the power-operated doors which are installed in many buses on the continent; but it may not be generally known that quite a number of these are made in England. Recently 150 British buses have been supplied to the Netherlands State Railways fitted with double sliding doors of the G. D. Peters pneumatic type. A photograph of one bus from this large export order may be of interest.

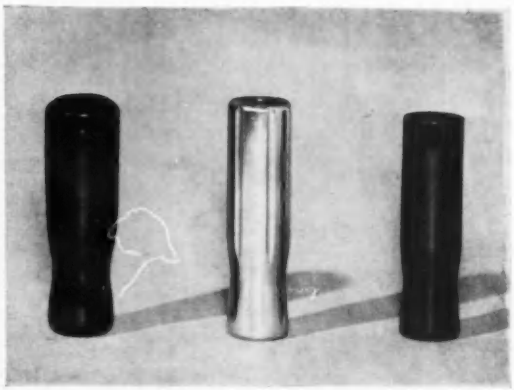
F. J. DAWSON

Birmingham

Power-operated doors of British design and construction are a feature of this Crossley bus, one of a fleet built in Britain for Holland. See letter from Mr F. J. Dawson



Comparison of a moulded coffee-percolator handle (right) *with its steel master shows the close reproduction obtainable with the moulding technique described below*



Improvement in shape was effected when, from the sample screw-driver handle in wood, left, *the steel master,* centre, *was developed. From it was made the sample moulding,* right

Plastic moulding for short runs

WITH A PROCESS now being operated by Ferrand Luttmer Plastics Ltd, the manufacture of plastic mouldings in small quantities is an economic proposition. This process is a development of the well-known jelly-mould technique, in which a flexible mould is cast round a steel master of the same form as the article to be produced. As the only tooling involved is the production of the master and the casting of the mould, sample mouldings can be produced in a few days, while costs are much lower than for the conventional type of tooling: a dozen or so prototype mouldings can be made economically.

Articles are being produced in thermo-setting phenol-base resins in a wide range of colours, in both opaque and translucent material, and the slight flexibility of the rubber-like plastic mould enables undercuts, recesses and fine detail to be moulded.

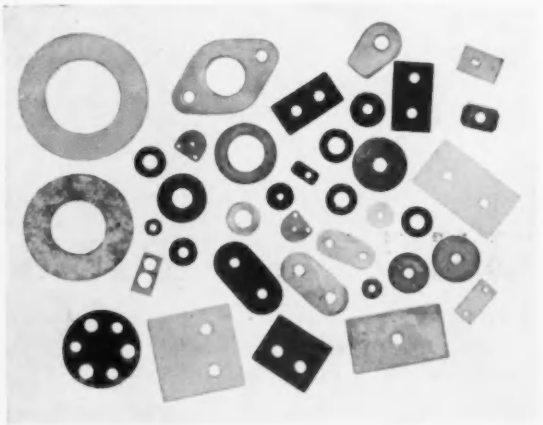
The process is suitable for the manufacture of large articles (weighing a hundredweight or more) as well as small articles; but the problem of producing thin, flat sections free from warping has not yet been overcome. The technique is most suitable for products possessing at least one flat surface, however small—this surface being required to form the open top surface of the mould.

Marketing agents for the company are Glyndova Ltd, 146 Grove End Gardens, London NW8.

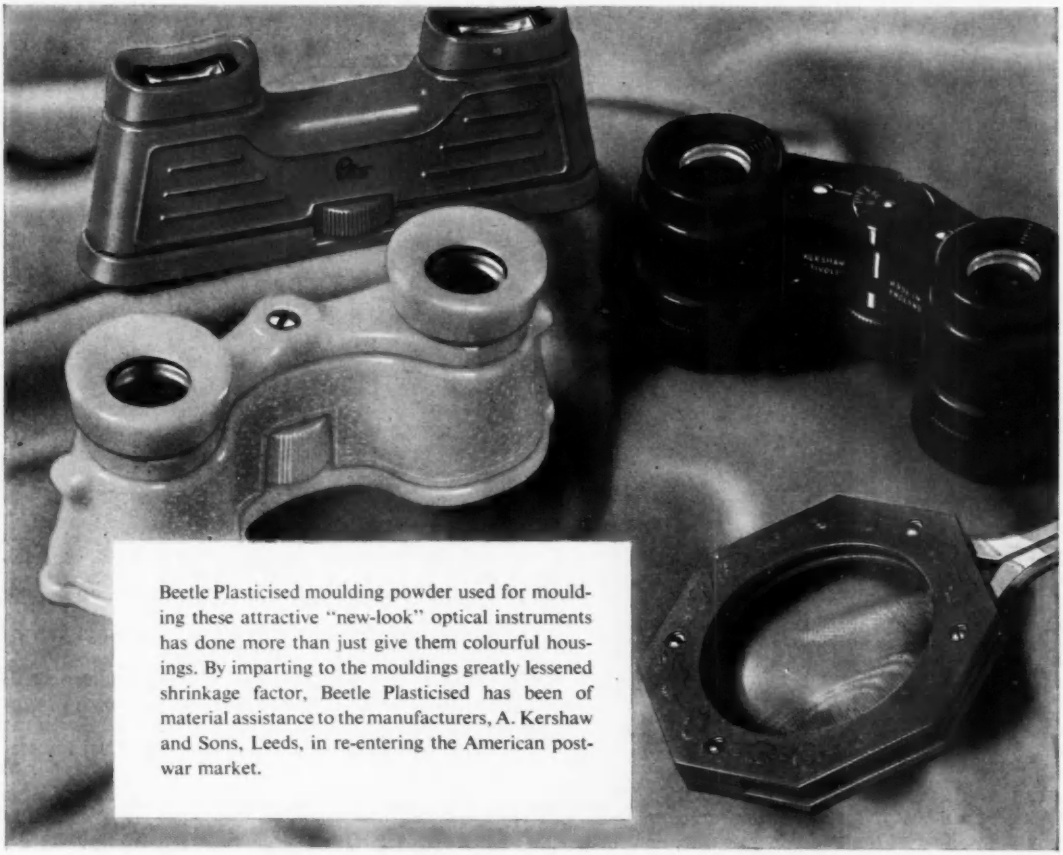
Many uses of mica

MICA—A CRYSTALLINE mineral found in ancient rock formations, especially in India, is more widely used than is, perhaps, generally realised. The photograph on right is reproduced from a booklet about mica recently published by Langley London Ltd (72 Borough High Street, SE1), in which it forms one of nine pages of pictures illustrating different shapes in which the material is fabricated.

"Built-up" mica can be moulded in many forms, and intricate shapes can be stamped from it when in sheet form.



Washers and packing-pieces in many shapes, made of mica



Beetle Plasticised moulding powder used for moulding these attractive "new-look" optical instruments has done more than just give them colourful housings. By imparting to the mouldings greatly lessened shrinkage factor, Beetle Plasticised has been of material assistance to the manufacturers, A. Kershaw and Sons, Leeds, in re-entering the American post-war market.

Export brings its own problems where plastic articles moulded over heavy inserts are concerned. Exposure to intense dry heat and severe temperature variation may cause cracking and crazing. Beetle Plasticised moulding powder incorporates a special plasticiser to lessen the shrinkage factor and overcome this tendency. Mouldings can be made from it in all the many standard Beetle colours with a particularly warm texture and fine finish. If, like Kershaw's, you are exporting to a hot, dry country, or moulding over heavy inserts, perhaps Beetle Plasticised can help you too.

Whatever your moulding problem the B.I.P. Technical Service is always on call to help you in choosing the right material to ensure the best results.

Beetle Moulding Powders conform to the standards laid down in BS 1322.

BEETLE Plasticised

AMINOPLASTIC MOULDING POWDERS

B·I·P GROUP

Distributed by **THE BEETLE PRODUCTS CO. LTD.,** *1 Argyll Street, London, W.1.*

BEETLE is a trade mark registered in Great Britain and in most countries of the world.

NEW DESIGN IN METAL, GLASS, PLASTICS

GLASS DOORS FOR ovens have often been suggested, as desirable design features, by speakers at Housewives' Forums. The gas cooker shown here incorporates this feature. Its door is the full size of the oven and consists of two thicknesses of Armourplate glass with an air space between. This, it is claimed, prevents steaming over and ensures prefect insulation. Manufacturers are the Vulcan Stove Co Ltd, Exeter.

IN THE NEW Ilford *Advocate* camera, illustrated above, the body is die-cast in aluminium silicon alloy. A stove ivory enamel finish ensures that it is light in colour as well as weight; clearly, more attention has been given to its "eye-appeal" than is usual with miniature cameras. Price £15 15*s* plus tax.

The *Craftsman* (below) is a less expensive Ilford model, specially designed for production in plastics; its sides have a grained surface to provide a firm grip.

THIS COMBINED ELECTRIC kettle and saucepan is being made by Bulpitt & Sons Ltd. Only one heat source is used; the immersion element in the kettle. A hinged handle on the kettle enables the saucepan to be removed easily, and the lid fits either kettle or saucepan. The latter is of polished aluminium, and the former of chromium-plated copper. The spout, handle, lid and body of the kettle are standard components used also in other Bulpitt products. Retail selling price is 84*s*.

The unit was one of the exhibits shown in the British section of the recent exhibition of industrial design in Amsterdam (p. 8).

Notebook

Furniture design conference

A CONFERENCE on furniture design, organised by the Council of Industrial Design, will be held from 18 to 22 July at the Royal Institute of British Architects, London.

Papers addressed to the scientist, technician, manufacturer, distributor and designer will be given on some of the factors affecting design, such as the scientific, social and economic aspects; the architectural setting; modern and traditional materials; hand and machine methods of production; distribution and training of designers. An open discussion forum will follow each paper.

The conference is free, but those interested should write to the Council of Industrial Design for formal enrolment.

More elbow-room in buses

NEWS OF TWO methods of providing roomier seats and wider gangways in buses comes simultaneously from British and American operators. In Britain, the first eight-foot-wide bus ordered by London Transport went into service last month. Normal width of British buses is 7 ft. 6 in., and the additional six inches are used to provide four extra inches on the gangway and an inch on each seat.

The new bus is one of a batch of 500, the first in London to take advantage of legislation which makes the eight-foot width permissible on certain routes. (The provinces have moved more quickly in this matter, and eight-foot buses are already operating in several Northern towns.)

The American bus—running experimentally in New York City—also has four inches added to the aisle, but this addition has been made without any increase of overall width. Instead, the seats are "staggered"; that is, one in each pair is placed about eight inches further back than the other, so that the passengers' shoulders overlap. Apparently it is considered that by thus staggering the seats, their width can be reduced without any reduction in the standard of comfort.

Caterpillar train

AN ALUMINIUM TRAIN whose small coaches—20 ft. long—have no axles and only two wheels each has been built for the Spanish National Railways. The wheels are individually suspended at the rear of the coach, each coach hooking onto the one ahead, and the bodywork is only 18 in. from the rails. All this is said to reduce derailing tendencies : it is claimed that the train can travel at 120 m.p.h. on the straight and 80 m.p.h. on curves.

Although designed by Spanish engineers, this train, the *Talgo*, was built by the American Car and Foundry Co, who are now building a similar train for demonstration in the USA.

Answers for the consumer

A WELCOME TREND among manufacturers is the practice of spreading technical information about the kind of product in which they deal, as distinct from advertisement-matter relating only to their own goods. Two recent examples of this trend are booklets issued by Palatial Furniture Ltd and Halex Ltd. *Get to know Furniture*, issued by the former, sells at 3*s* 6*d*, and sets out to answer many of the questions the public might be expected to ask about both period and modern furniture. *What's what about Plastics*, issued free, is intended as a non-technical reference book for salespeople and others who may be asked by their customers for general information about plastics. Not the least helpful nor the least amusing feature of this Halex publication is the quasi-phonetic spelling used to indicate the pronunciation of the long names of many plastic materials, *e.g.*, sell-you-loas/ass-ett-o/bew-ti-rate (cellulose aceto-butyrate).

Retailer's influence

THE LARGE-SCALE RETAILER can influence the design of the goods he sells in two ways: by selective buying, and by influencing his manufacturer-suppliers *at the design stage*, before production begins. The second practice is much less widespread than the first, but it may well become more familiar as store executives increasingly recognise the importance of design. Recently the Dolcis chain of shoe stores has adopted the unusual course of setting up its own design department (see p. 14). The function of this is to co-operate closely with the various manufacturers who make shoes for the firm, and to ensure that all their products have something of the same house style—that, in the firm's own phrase, they are all "distinctively Dolcis."

Here is an example that may be followed by other retailers, outside the shoe trade as well as in it.

Photographs

THE COUNCIL OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN is now in a position to suggest the names of good and experienced photographers to firms who wish that the reproduction of their goods should do full justice to their design, quality and finish. Enquiries should be addressed to the Chief Industrial Officer, Council of Industrial Design, Tilbury House, Petty France, London SW1.

Exhibition news

METHODS OF TRAINING designers at the Chicago Institute of Design are being shown at an exhibition held by the Council of Industrial Design at Murray House, Vandon Passage, Petty France, London SW1 until 29 July.

Both the Industrial Finishes Exhibition and the Advertising and Marketing Exhibition have been postponed. The former is now announced for September 1950 and the latter after the 1951 Festival of Britain.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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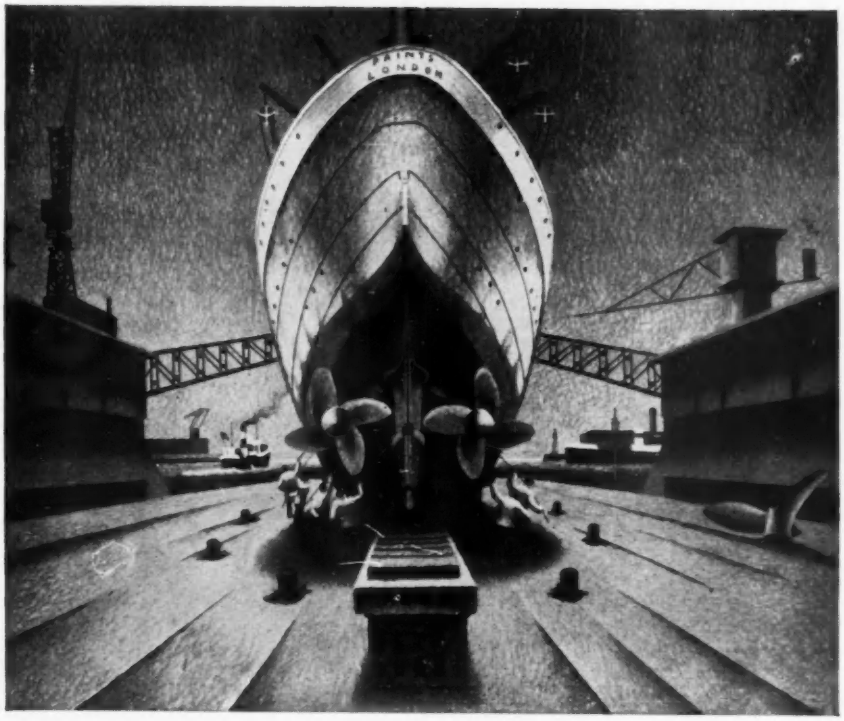
Small advertisements can be accepted at 2*s* per line (minimum 6*s*); box number, 1*s* extra. A limited number of display advertisements can also be accepted; details on application.



CORROSION

An eminent British metallurgist estimated that every year in the world some 30 million tons of steel become unusable by corrosion, that is by rust. This figure must largely be guesswork, but it is an impressive reminder that, though modern skill and knowledge have enabled the builder and engineer of today to improve on the work of their fathers, their greatest achievements are still wasting assets. Steel and cement may replace wood and brick, but for all their strength and hardness, they are not immune from decay. They need protecting from the effects of the atmosphere, from sun and wind and rain and sea water. It is one of the duties of the chemist to see that this protection is given in the shape of better and still better paints. Until recent years paints were simple materials, made from linseed oil or pigments such as white lead. Modern research has completely changed the picture. Today the discovery and production of new protective coverings is a highly scientific part of the British chemical industry, dealing with an ever-growing variety of chemical substances which provide the bases for new resins, lacquers, and finishes; paints specially designed to prevent rust, to stop decay in wood, to resist heat, to imitate stone; lacquers for metal work; dopes for aeroplane and balloon fabrics; finishes of every sort for every sort of article. If protection is in a sense the first requirement of a paint, decoration comes a close second. The demand for more and brighter colours has been steadily growing for years. It has been at once stimulated and satisfied by the happy collaboration between the paint chemist and his opposite number in the dyestuffs and pigment industries. Together they have enabled colour to be applied to a constantly increasing number of articles used in daily life. They contribute to a more gaily coloured world.

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